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INTRODUCTION

To begin with, let's define Apologetics. Apologetics comes from a Greek word **απολογία** (apologia) which literally means a reasoned defense, explanation or an answer. In the New Testament the word apologia is found at many places such as Act 22:1, 1 Peter 3:15 etc.

The aim of this little tract is to demonstrate some Scriptural texts that support some Catholic beliefs and practices, hence answering some common objections our separated brethren hold against us.

Topics covered include:

1. Sacred images
2. Bowing
3. Kneeling

Hope you'll enjoy this presentation, God bless ☺

Sacred images

In Deuteronomy 5:8, God commandment "thou shall not make a graven image" is entirely connected to the worship of false gods. God does not prohibit images to be used in worship, but He prohibits the worshipping of images as a god.

God commands the making of images

God commands the making of golden cherubim (Exodus 25:18-22, 26:1, 31) and the bronze serpent (Numbers 21:8-9);

Solomon's temple contained statues of cherubim and images of cherubim, oxen, and lions (1Kings 6:23-35, 7:29-36).

In 2 Kings 18:4, it was only when the people began to worship the statue did they incur God's wrath, and the king destroyed it.

The only image of God that Catholics worship is Jesus Christ, who is the "image" (Greek **εικων** "eikon") of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15)

To bow or not to bow, that is the question

Joshua bowed down and did obeisance before an angel, but committed no sin in doing so (Joshua 5:14).

Ruth bowed down to the ground before Boaz in gratitude (Ruth 2:8-10), but she was not worshipping Boaz.

The Shunamite Woman bowed down before the Prophet Elisha after he had raised her child from the dead (2 Kings 4:37), but she was not committing idolatry by doing so.

Neither was Lot, when he "bowed down" before two

angels of the Lord in Genesis 19:1. Nor was David sinning against God's commandment when he "bowed down and did obeisance" before King Saul (1 Samuel 24:8).

Bathsheba and Nathan the Prophet were also blameless when they "bowed down in honor" before King David, while the monarch was on his deathbed (1 Kings 1:16, 25).

When Jacob and Esau had their dramatic reconciliation, we read: "He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother" (Genesis 33:3).

Kneeling

"Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven;" (1Kings 8:54, RSV)

"And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and kneeling before him said, 'Lord, have mercy on my son...'" (Matthew 17:14-15, RSV)

"But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'" (Luke 5:8, RSV)

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1. Relics
2. Holy water
3. Vain repetition?

Relics

Elisha's bones: "And as a man was being buried, lo, a marauding band was seen and the man was cast into the grave of Eli'sha; and as soon as the man touched the bones of Eli'sha, he revived, and stood on his feet." (2Kings 13:21, RSV)

Elisha's bones bring a man back to life. The saints' bones are often kept beneath the altars of Catholic Churches and have brought about supernatural cures throughout the Christian age.

Jesus' garment: "She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, 'If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well.' And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease." (Mark 5:27-29; see also Matthew 9:20-22, RSV)

Peter's shadow: "[T]hey even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed." (Acts 5:15-16, RSV)

Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons:

"God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out." (Acts 19:11-12)

The souls of the martyrs are seen beneath the heavenly altar. Their bones are often placed beneath altars in Catholic Churches around the world. (cf. Rev. 6:9)

Holy Water

Aaron and his sons were washed in holy water in their consecration to the priesthood. (cf. Exodus. 29:4; Leviticus. 8:6) Thus, we see the use of holy water during the beginning of salvation history.

The Lord requires Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet in holy water before they offered sacrifices to Him. (cf. Exodus. 30:18-19).

In John 9:6-7, our Lord Jesus Christ uses clay and spittle to heal the blind man's eyes, and ordered him to wash in the pool of Siloam to effect the cure. Jesus did not need to use spittle, clay and water, but He does to demonstrate that God uses the material things He created to give graces and heal us.

On vain repetition

In Matthew 6:7 Jesus teaches "do not heap up empty phrases" in prayer, some Protestants use this verse to criticize various Catholic forms of prayer which repeat phrases, such as litanies and the Rosary. However when the scripture is analyzed very well, it shows that Jesus' focus is on the "vain," and not on the "repetition."

For example in Matthew 26:44, Jesus Christ prayed a third time in the garden of Gethsemane, saying the exact same words again. It is not the repetition that is the issue. It's the vanity. God looks into our heart, not solely at our words.

Also, in Luke 18:13, the tax collector kept beating his breast and praying "God be merciful to me, a sinner." This repetitive prayer was pleasing to God because it was offered with a sincere and repentant heart.

"And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'" (Revelation 4:8, RSV)

In Psalm 136, the phrase "For His steadfast love endures forever" is more repetitious than any Catholic prayer, and it is God's divine Word.

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